

A Vision for the Future Development of Asheville Concentrating on
Land Use, Transportation, Air and Water Quality, and Economic Development

Asheville City Development Plan 2025

Dedicated to the Memory of:

Lionel (Will) Williams - Planning and Zoning Commissioner 1998-2001.

Soft-spoken and thoughtful, Will was an anchoring force whose passion for the community was translated into sound decisions that will continue to shape the future of Asheville.

Benson Slosman – “Gentle Ben” was an enlightened developer who could see value where others could not. His redevelopment efforts epitomized the Smart Growth movement and foresaw the future of the River District.

Julian Price – Julian was a quiet man whose love for Asheville was reflected in extensive physical and cultural investments. He supported Downtown development and Downtown businesses in countless ways. His work continues through the award winning Public-Interest Projects, his development and commercial investment corporation.



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Preface: Public Participation in the Asheville City Development Plan 2025

The Asheville City Development Plan 2025 was the joint effort of the City Plan Advisory Committee, formed by City Council in April 2001, and the City of Asheville Planning and Development staff. The City Plan Advisory Committee (CPAC) was a group of 60 citizen volunteers who live and work in Asheville. CPAC's primary goals were: (1) to assure that the people of Asheville's ideas for our City's future were heard and (2) to assure that those ideas were reflected in City Development Plan 2025. The first step in accomplishing these goals was making sure that CPAC represented a broad cross-section of the Asheville community. To that end, the committee included members of all ages and all races, from the business community, neighborhood groups, the development community, affordable housing organizations, local government, property owners, church groups, and other community service organizations.

The members of CPAC wanted to assure both themselves and the community of an open and effective process. They decided that both the plan process and the plan needed to meet agreed-upon principles; that is, they needed to be:

- Relevant: Are we continually working toward a final product that will be relevant to the way our community lives, works, plays and grows?
- Acceptable: Are we continually striving to find outcomes acceptable to the community as a whole?
- Usable: Are we creating a product that community members will be able to clearly understand and effectively use?
- Workable: Does the product work as a tool for equitably balancing our community's diverse viewpoints, wants and needs?

These principles were repeatedly revisited as CPAC went about its work.

Originally six public forums were planned for the summer of 2001. CPAC decided that, to make the process as accessible as possible, more time was needed for spreading the word about the forums and more forums should be made available to the people of Asheville. As a result, a series of nine public forums was held in November in various locations all over the city. Forums were held both in the afternoon and in the evening, as well as on a Saturday, so that work schedules would not prevent attendance. At these forums the public was asked to share their ideas on the future of the City of Asheville. In addition, at the request of CPAC and the planning staff, a website was created to solicit public input over the internet, a dedicated phone line was set up with voice mail to solicit comments from those without access to computers, and walk-in comments were solicited at the "Plan-A-Terrium" storefront offices on Page Avenue and Wall Street in Downtown Asheville. At these offices planning information was made available to the public and City staff members were present to answer questions about the plan and plan

process. These efforts continued through the end of 2001 and, as a result, hundreds of ideas for a better Asheville were generated.

The next stage was review of the ideas generated and creation of the draft plan. Every idea generated was reviewed by members of CPAC and also by members of the planning staff. CPAC members organized the ideas into categories and noted ideas which received repeated mention and support. In addition, every idea generated has been appended to the plan so that they are available to the members of the City Council. These ideas were the basis for the planning staff's drafting of this new comprehensive plan for our City. In the spring of 2002, after more months of work, the draft plan was made available for public comment, both on the website and in the planning office.

While City staff was at work reviewing the community's ideas and creating the draft plan, the members of CPAC were preparing for submission of the plan to the community. It was agreed that the draft plan was not to be submitted to City Council until every member of the community had another series of opportunities to contribute to the plan. Comments on the plan were solicited on the website, via email and printable feedback forms, and CPAC hosted a series of public information sessions and another public forum. For the information sessions CPAC compiled a list of every identifiable community group in Asheville. Each group was invited to send members to one of the series of information sessions. At the sessions, the draft plan was presented and comments were solicited. In addition, the group members were encouraged to publicize final public forum opportunity to their members. The culmination of this outreach effort was a well-attended final public forum held on May 30, 2002. After the forum, the public comment period was extended to June 20, 2002, to assure that community members who missed the forum had every possible opportunity to participate. Although the draft plan was remarkably well-received in the various public comment opportunities described, the 2025 Plan has been greatly strengthened and improved in response to those comments.

The volunteer citizen members of CPAC and City staff have spent hundreds of hours trying to make sure that this plan represents the authentic voice of the people of Asheville. Each resident of our community has had countless opportunities to make his or her voice heard. Many, many residents have taken time out of their busy lives to do their part to guide Asheville's future. The resulting plan is not perfect. It should always be treated as a work in progress. But given the blood, sweat, tears, and time that the people of Asheville have committed to it, we believe the 2025 Plan is representative of our community's hopes and dreams for the future.



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"We are confronted with unsurmountable opportunities."

Pogo

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Sincere thanks to **Mr. Chuck Tessier** whose innovative ideas concerning the Riverway and the general development of our community are reflected in this document.

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“Planning is what you
do before you do the
thing you want to do.”

*Warren Jake Wicker
NC Institute of Government*





Photo by Charles Worley, Mayor

On behalf of the Asheville City Council, I am pleased to present the ***Asheville City Development Plan 2025***. This document reflects the work of an extensive committee of volunteers, a variety of City advisory boards and commissions, outside agencies and elected officials, city staff, and, most importantly, the citizens of the City of Asheville.

This document, developed with extensive public participation, reflects a careful and comprehensive analysis of future trends that affect the growth of our City, along with goals and strategies intended to favorably position the City with regard to those trends.

Today, the City of Asheville, just as city planner John Nolen wrote in 1925, “stands on the threshold of a new state in its evolution.” Technological advances, rapid population growth, new ideas about the way to effectively manage this growth, public dreams and concerns about the future - all these things affect the future development of Asheville. By taking these matters into account and developing a simultaneously careful and ambitious plan that addresses challenges and seizes opportunities, the City of Asheville is ensuring that its destiny remains under its control.

I want to thank all of those who have generously given their time and ideas to bring this plan into reality. In particular, I want to express my appreciation for the hard work of the City Plan Advisory Committee. The work of this committee has resulted in a document that will effectively facilitate the growth of our City and one that reflects the desires and needs of our citizens. Thanks to their work, this is truly a document of the people.

Charles Worley
Mayor



Summary

"Good government obtains when those who are near are made happy, and those who are far off are attracted."

Confucius; The Analects; ca 480 BC

The City of Asheville has a broad tradition of fine comprehensive planning. From the *Asheville City Plan 1925* prepared for the City by the famed city planner John Nolen to the *Asheville City Plan 2010* prepared in 1987 with widespread public input, the City has a history of effective and implementable comprehensive plans.

The ***Asheville City Development Plan 2025*** was prepared under the direction of a diverse and dedicated group of volunteers, the City Plan Advisory Committee. This committee ensured that public involvement was maximized and that the resulting plan reflected the issues and concerns identified by the community. The committee also made sure that the plan focused on issues of critical relevance to the future of the City.

One of the great challenges for Asheville is how to accommodate growth. *What type?*

How much? Where? – these are the big growth questions. Public comments and independent analysis of land use, transportation, air and water quality, and economic development trends have told us that the citizens of Asheville need and desire growth in the following areas:

- Skilled workforce, particularly high-tech and medical;
- Entrepreneurship, especially local small-businesses and home occupations;
- Increased property investment, particularly along our commercial corridors;
- Increased accommodation of population growth within the City, particularly along commercial corridors, in compatible neighborhood infill, and in urban villages;
- Mixed-use land use pattern;
- Multi-modal transportation opportunities;
- Development reflecting the character of Asheville; and
- Development that occurs in a pattern that is sensitive to air and water quality concerns.

Purpose of the Plan

The ***Asheville City Development Plan 2025*** proposes a land use pattern, transportation network and system of City services and



infrastructure that reflects the above community desires and wishes concerning the future growth of the City. The plan includes goals and strategies that will guide the City of Asheville in meeting those desires. These goals and strategies typically requires separate actions on the part of City Council, City staff, or other boards and agencies; consequently, periodic adjustments to the plan will be necessary to reflect the actual actions that are taken as the goals and strategies are considered, modified, and/or implemented and as circumstances change. To this end, the ***Asheville City Development Plan 2025*** must be considered as a guide for decision-making, rather than the “final decision” on any particular issue.



Introduction

"We are of course a nation of differences. Those differences don't make us weak. They're the source of our strength."

Jimmy Carter on stage at Al Smith dinner in New York City and October 21, 1976 and as quoted in Power Quotes by Daniel B. Baker (1992)

The first comprehensive plan for the City of Asheville was prepared by the renowned landscape architect and city planner John Nolen.

Nolen's plan was called the **Asheville City Plan 1925**. In that plan, Nolen established the basic development pattern for Asheville. This development pattern continues today, reflected in the homes and apartments, the urban parks and schools, the interconnected streets, and the stately commercial structures of the older parts of the City. We see this timeless, traditional development pattern in Montford, in Albemarle Park, along Haywood Road, and in Downtown Asheville. This development pattern has been preserved by the careful attention of Asheville's citizens and today it constitutes some of the most desirable and livable real estate in the entire City.

John Nolen Plan – 1925

This is why plans are important. Successful city plans create long-term community value; they protect and preserve our open spaces and

historic resources; they promote a higher quality of life; they foster a climate for positive and sustainable economic development; they recognize and respond to social and technological changes that shape the future of our community and region.

*"We have used our existing Comprehensive Plan - the **2010 Plan** - for almost 15 years. It has served us well. However, times have changed and with each passing day, the **2010 Plan** becomes less relevant. As Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Commission, at nearly every meeting, I see situations where my board could use guidance about how to apply these new ideas. We need a new comprehensive plan to provide that guidance."*
Max Haner, Chairman, Planning and Zoning Commission, 1999-2001

The **Asheville City Development Plan 2025**, has been prepared in accordance with key guiding principles established by the City Council. These principles promote Smart Growth. As in the Nolen plan, Smart Growth planning is about making the right choices:

- Sustainable economic development that guides us into the New Economy;
- Providing a wide mixture of housing types

- for all income levels;
- Protecting our natural resources and respecting our mountain heritage;
- Effectively involving the public in decisions that affect them;
- Providing transportation options where transit, bicycles, and walking join the automobile in getting us around our neighborhoods and business centers; and
- Making farsighted investment in our public streets, in our open spaces and parks, and in our community gathering places.

Smart Growth planning promotes the orderly development of our City. Just as importantly, it seeks extensive public involvement and public agreement in planning our future. Perhaps the most important role for the ***Asheville City Development Plan 2025*** is as a visioning document that reflects and unifies the direction desired by our citizenry for the future development of Asheville.

As the largest city in western North Carolina, Asheville has traditionally been a regional leader in business and cultural activities. Now, because of the City's national recognition as a great place to live, work and play, Asheville is

Many of Nolen's words resonate with us today :

- Asheville stands today on the threshold of a new state in its evolution.
- The automobile is changing the radius of city life.
- Asheville needs a better street system, more parks, a (*new*) Civic Center.
- (*The*) French Broad (*River*) divides City into two distinct localities.
- A Passenger *Rail* Station *in* Biltmore is advocated.
- A diagram of the main thoroughfare system of Asheville does not present the same orderly uniform appearance that a similar diagram of rectangular or more level cities would show....{*Consequently,*} State highways are the backbone of Asheville's thoroughfare system.
- Pack Square is and probably always will be the center of activity for Asheville.
- Pack Square is the Geographical Center of the City.
- A well organized, well maintained City Market will greatly stimulate...{*the local economy*}.
- The main lines of the {*greenway*} system follow the banks of the French Broad River and the Swannanoa River....
- {*Regarding native arts and crafts industries of the mountains,*}(t)here are no disadvantages—in fact, there is everything to gain—in encouraging this type of indigenous industrial life and providing for its legitimate extension.
- Biltmore Village is a fine example of town planning.
- Zoning is no panacea for all the evils of shortsighted city building nor an alternative for constructive city planning. At its best, it can only prevent and restrict undesirable building and this acts more in a negative than positive way. Much of the present zoning is being done without a city plan and in such cases it has a tendency to perpetuate existing conditions rather than make possible right future growth.
- We also believe that there should be a certain amount of flexibility in the {*zoning*} ordinance making more allowance for change and growth.

"A city by definition creates jobs."

Frank Vardy from Alex Marshall;
How Cities Work

the City's growing reputation is based on that character alone.

Asheville has been highly successful in developing both the reputation for and the reality of its high quality of life. But there are growing pains associated with this success including concerns about traffic and transportation, land use, affordable housing, economic development, and air and water quality.

Advertisement promoting
quality of life to attract
skilled employees.



attracting interest from a much broader area. The challenge is to keep Asheville true to its character and recognize that

The City's mountainous topography and natural resources, including the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers, are both a major strength and a major challenge. These natural features provide breathtaking vistas and outstand-

ing recreational opportunities, while confining and directing development. Asheville is as limited in land for development as she is blessed by her natural resources.

The City of Asheville is truly at a threshold, one that will profoundly affect its future. It is in this context that the *Asheville City Development Plan 2025* has been developed.

Plan Format

The *Asheville City Development Plan 2025*, after this introduction, contains six sections and three appendices. Each section is described in more detail below.

Vision - Smart Growth Initiative: This section indicates the key planning issues affecting Asheville for the future that have been identified through public input and through an extensive analysis of development trends. Additionally, this section provides a philosophical framework – Smart Growth – through which these planning issues can be considered and addressed and lists existing accomplishments, future tasks, and needed tools to accomplish a Smart Growth development pattern for

the City of Asheville.

Communication and Coordination: This section discusses public participation and intergovernmental coordination and establishes goals and strategies intended to improve the effectiveness of each of these important areas of communication.

Land Use and Transportation: This section discusses City land use and transportation issues in a linked and comprehensive fashion, concentrating on changing the development pattern that exists along our major road corridors in a fundamental way and providing greater development flexibility and guidance in order to accomplish these changes, including the promotion of corridor and infill development opportunities as well as expanded transit opportunities. Additionally, goals and objectives are identified and proposed for such key City issues as housing, critical development areas, and land use compatibility.

Air Quality and Water Quality: This section identifies key issues and trends related to air quality and water quality in the Asheville area and Western North Carolina region. Addition-

A Golden Administration

Farsighted City Investment Created the Asheville We Know Today

The four-year administration of John H. Cathey (1923-1927) produced the following partial list of accomplishments:

- McCormick Field - Land purchase and construction of the baseball field and stands
- Recreation Park - Recreation Park was developed
- Municipal Golf Course - Land purchase and construction
- Pack Memorial Library - Erected on South Pack Square
- School Construction - The Claxton, Vance, Newton and Stephens Lee schools were completed
- Asheville High School - Money was approved and appropriated for the construction of Asheville High School
- Beaucatcher Tunnel – The tunnel was constructed as a joint City-County project
- Bee Tree Reservoir – The reservoir was constructed and a trunk main run to Beaucatcher Mountain
- North Fork Reservoir – Land was acquired for the North Fork reservoir
- City Hall – The City Hall building was nearing completion
- Street Paving – Over \$4.5 million dollars was spent to pave streets, primarily in West Asheville

ally, it proposes a variety of goals and strategies intended to direct local and regional efforts to improve air quality and water quality in the City and region.

Economic Development: This section identifies the key national and international trends



"The ratio of urban to rural dwellers is steadily increasing. By 2015 more than half of the world's population will be urban."

*Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future With
Nongovernment Experts: National Intelligence Council;
December, 2000*

that are shaping the new economy, analyzes those trends in relation to the strengths and weaknesses of the Asheville area, and proposes goals and

objectives that will promote a diverse and strong economy for Asheville's future.

City Services: This section outlines the importance of key services and infrastructure and quality of life issues. Public safety, streets, utilities, parks, greenways and open space, are discussed as part of the essential quality of life infrastructure of the City.

Center City: This section discusses the importance of Downtown Asheville to the rest of the City and the region. It identifies critical issues affecting the future development and functioning of Downtown, and proposes a series of goals and objectives that will promote a continued healthy and vibrant Downtown.



Implementation Matrix: This section summarizes the necessary implementation tasks that will carry this plan from concept to reality. Responsibility for each implementation task is indicated, a timeline is established for each task, and, as appropriate, particular public participation processes for involving the public in decision-making are indicated. This matrix will serve as the benchmark for plan implementation as well as the basis for determining the need for periodic changes to the plan.

Interesting Facts

- Asheville has tripled in land area over the past 50 years.
- Asheville's density has decreased by 50% over the past 50 years.
- Between 1990 and 2000, Asheville's population increased by 11.8%, slowest of the state's 15 largest cities.
- Asheville's development patterns since 1950 and its hilly topography make interstates and state roads the main travel routes for local traffic.
- NCDOT projects that 80% of the traffic on the new I-26 Connector will be LOCAL traffic.
- In 2000, neighborhoods contributed 56.5% of City property tax revenue, yielding \$1,487/acre.
- In 2000, commercial uses contributed 43.5% of City property tax revenue, yielding only \$1,152/acre.
- In 2000, 20% of the land in the City was tax exempt.

Updating and Implementing the Plan: This comprehensive plan reflects the public input and technical analysis from a particular point in time. However, public desires will shift and change, technologic and economic realities will bring new challenges and opportunities, and new approaches will be developed to address new problems and concerns. This plan needs to be fluid in its application; when change occurs, the plan may need to be amended to reflect an appropriate response to that change. Consequently, the plan is intended to be reviewed annually to determine the progress of its implementation and to identify areas where incremental adjustment is needed. These annual reviews should coincide with the development of the City budget and capital improvement program in order to foster a close alignment between plan implementation and available resources. Additionally, the plan is intended to be fully revised no less frequently than once every five years.

City Growth and 2000 Census: Which Places Grew, and Why; Brookings Institution

Findings:

- The median growth rate for cities in the 1990s was 8.7 percent — more than double the median growth rate of the 1980s.
- Western cities grew the fastest, with an average growth rate of 19 percent. Northeastern cities, on average, declined. Southern cities grew substantially, but at about half the rate as Western cities, while Midwestern cities grew 3 percent on average.
- “High human capital” cities grew. The level of residents’ education and income are consistent predictors of urban growth.
- Cities with large manufacturing bases grew much more slowly than cities with strong service industries. Also, cities with high unemployment rates grew more slowly than those with low unemployment rates.
- Cities built for pedestrians and mass transit shrunk (with a few exceptions), while auto-dependent cities grew. Similarly, older cities declined and younger cities grew.
- Foreign-born residents contributed to strong city growth rates. Cities with more foreign-born residents in 1990 grew more quickly than other cities, up to a point.

“The envisioned city of tomorrow is not static; it evolves in response to shifting economies and political coalitions. A city’s underlying economic base, its governing coalition, and the vision of its leaders are in constant tension with other conflicting opportunities, possibilities and visions.”

Imagining Cityscapes: The Politics of Urban Development by Ann Bowman and Michael Pagano; Landlines, Lincoln Institute of Public Policy; March, 1996

“The elements of globalization--greater and freer flow of information, capital, goods, services, people, and the diffusion of power to nonstate actors of all kinds--will challenge the authority of virtually all governments.”

Global Trends 2015: A Dialogue About the Future with Nongovernment Experts; National Intelligence Council; December 2000

"There will be more people."

Steve Twomey, *Washington Post*, March 3, 2002

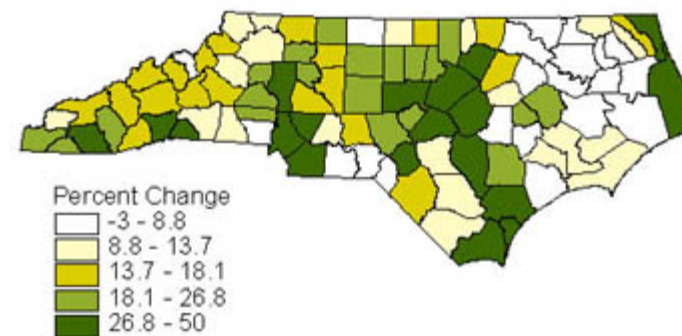
Demographic Changes

The above quote from Steve Twomey's **Washington Post** column on page 29 pretty much sums up the demographic prospects for the City of Asheville and the Asheville area. Our high quality of life is attracting retirees and job seekers and we will be annexing areas on the periphery of our City that have been and are undergoing development. While Asheville grew at the slowest rate of the 15 largest cities in North Carolina between 1990 and 2000, that growth rate was still over 11 percent. Buncombe County grew at about the average rate of statewide growth - over 20 percent.

There are a number of effects resulting from this rate of growth. For example, this growth rate is creating strong demand for housing - the Asheville area housing market is the most expensive in the state, partially as a result of growth pressures. As noted in the Land Use and Transportation section, even relatively small marginal increases in daily traffic resulting from population growth, can result in traffic congestion problems when local roads

are operating at or near design capacity. Sprawl development patterns, currently the means of absorbing this growth in effect outside the City Asheville, exacerbate transportation problems, make providing public services more expensive, and impact open spaces, farmland and scenic vistas. This growth will place increased pressure on all our City services, including parks and recreation, police, and fire.

Percent Change in Population
1990 to 2000



Population in 1990 is taken from uncorrected counts on 1990 Summary Tape File 1.

Produced by the NC State Data Center



Here are some key demographic facts and trends relevant to the Asheville area:

- The richest generation in the history of the world is at or nearing retirement age. These retirees will be looking for areas that offer a healthy, active lifestyle, dining and entertainment options, vibrant downtowns, and a variety of housing choices. Since we offer these amenities, many of them will be coming to Asheville.
- Due to our high quality of life, young people will be attracted to Asheville and the ones that are here will be reluctant to leave. There will be some willingness to accept underemployment in order to live in our area.
- People with families will also be attracted by our high quality of life, good schools, and enlightened small town atmosphere.
- Housing choices for these demographic groups range from large lot suburban development to high-quality but denser urban development. There is growing information that shows there is a demand by this population in general for more dense urban housing that is some 17% to 33% of the total (“Current Preferences and Future Demand

for Future Residential Environments;” Dowell Meyers and Elizabeth Gearin; Housing Policy Debate, Vol. 12, Issue 4; Fannie Mae Foundation). Given the extent to which our City has been developed with low density single family development (see Map 9; page 106), it makes sense to reserve some land for this type of use.

- Downtown Asheville, with its above-shop, highly-urban residential environment, grew the fastest of any neighborhood in the City during the past decade.
- Nationally, household size is shrinking, with married couples without children and single person households making up the country’s two largest household types. The City of Asheville has an average household size of 2.14 persons, according to the 2000 Census.

The populations of cities grow in three ways. First, there is the natural increase due to more children being born than people dying. Second, in-migration of people from outside cities add to the “native” population. Finally, the populations of cities grow through annexation.

According to State demographic information, annexation was the primary means by which

"The presence of immigrants is a sign of a first-tier, global city."

Alex Marshall; How Cities Work

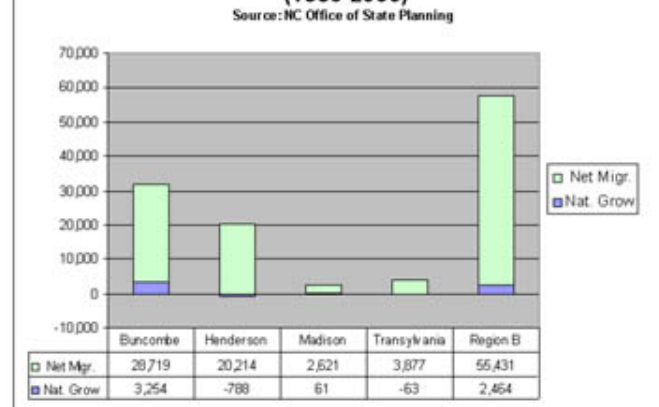
the City of Asheville's population has grown in the past decade, despite the fact that the City did not initiate any annex-

ations during most of the 1990s. This is because certain annexations initiated in the 1980s became effective in the early 1990s and because areas like Biltmore Park annexed voluntarily. According to the State figures, 4,575 people were added to the City of Asheville through annexation; this accounts for 65 percent of our total population growth of 7,034 persons between 1990 and 2000. The remaining 2,459 persons were added through either natural population increase or in-migration, although the bulk of that growth was through in-migration as the following chart indicates.

Immigration from foreign countries has not been a major factor in Asheville until relatively recently when the City began seeing an increase in immigration from Mexico, Central American countries, and from the Ukraine. Economic conditions and political instability in these areas of the world will continue to result

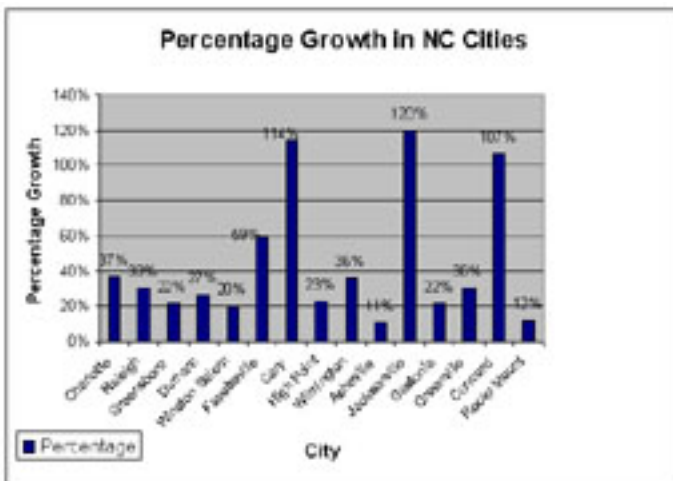
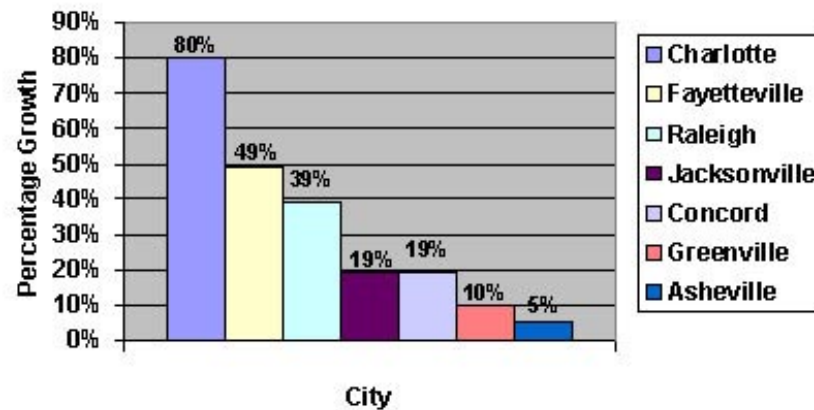
in continued immigration of these two population groups to our area, especially since there is a base population to provide support for such immigration and our region's low unemployment, service jobs, and construction employment offer opportunities for relatively easy entry into the workplace. These immigrant populations' social contributions will help broaden the culture of our region. Special efforts may be necessary to educate and assimilate these population groups into the region's culture in order to provide them with an environment for success.

**Fig. S.1 Population Change Drivers
Natural Increase and Net Migration
(1990-2000)**
Source: NC Office of State Planning



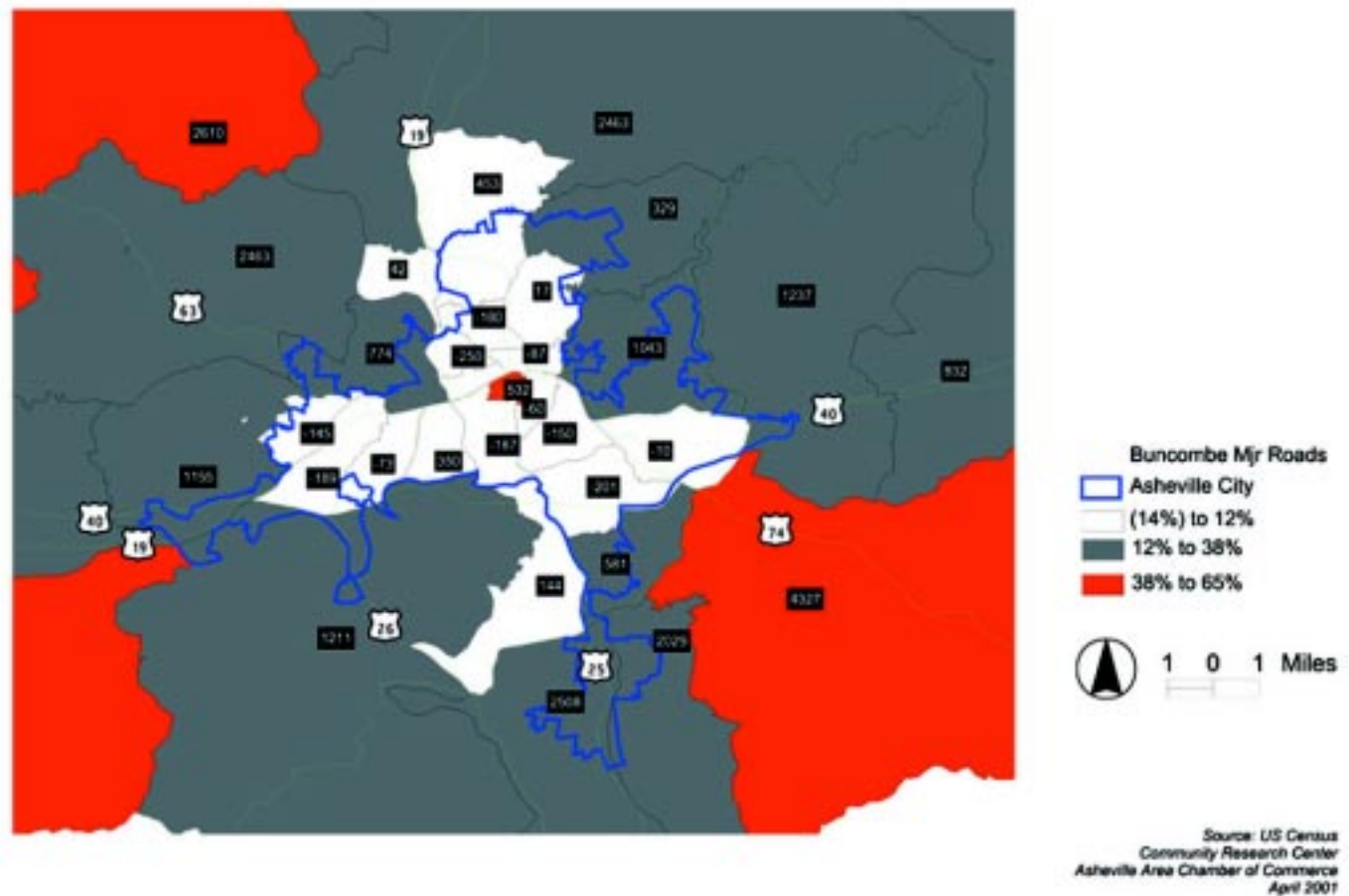
The City of Asheville Smart Growth policies indicate that we will do our best to absorb a growing percentage of the population growth of Buncombe County and Western North Carolina. This means that we will need to respond to both market forces and fiscal equity concerns by accommodating that population growth in denser, higher quality residential and mixed-use developments. City Economic Development Director Mac Williams refers to this as “density with amenity.”

Annexation Growth in the 1990s

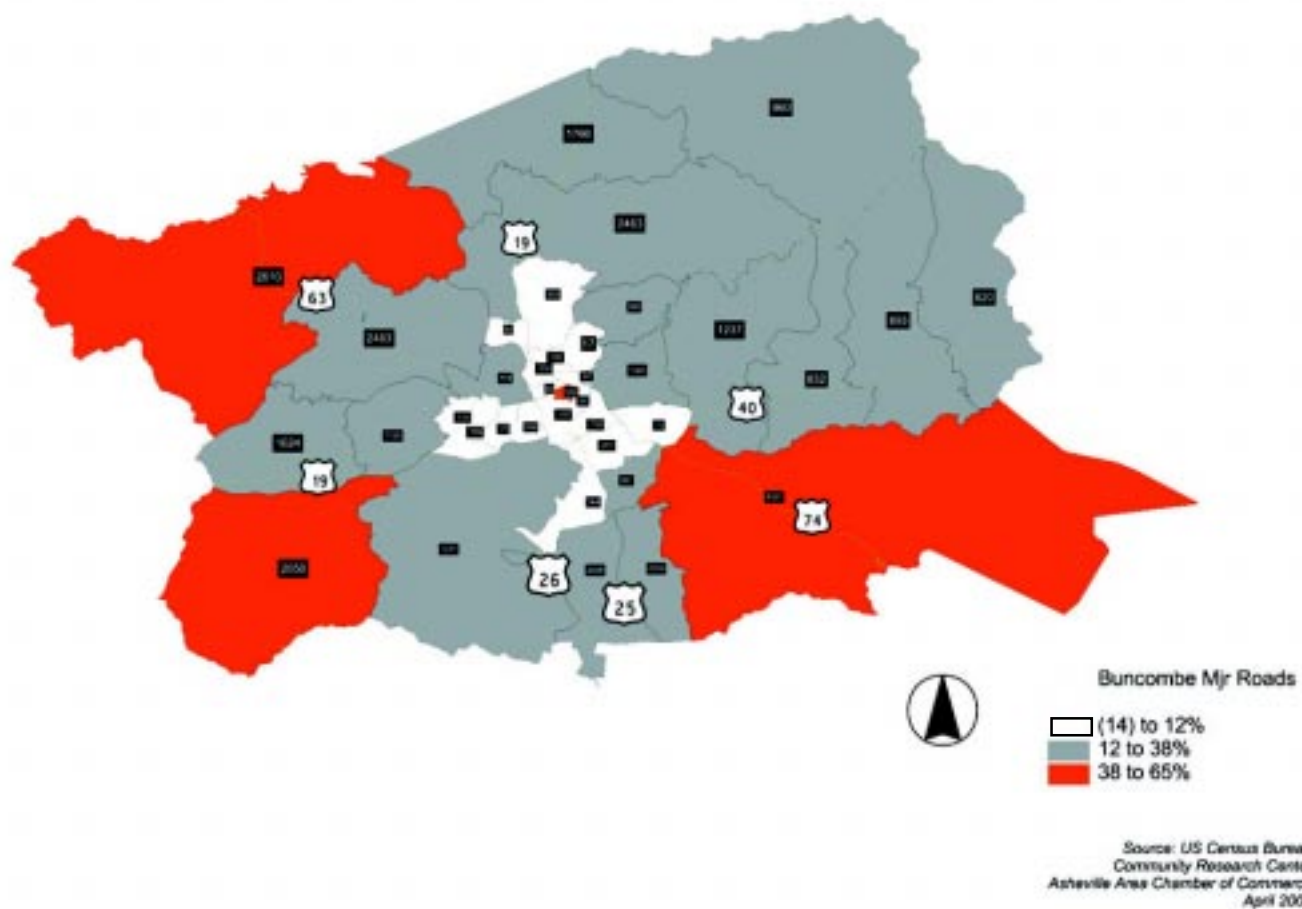


Source: Office of State Planning; Raleigh, NC

1990-2000 Population Change By Tract Asheville City Area



1990-2000 Population Change By Tract Buncombe County



Population Projections

The Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by the Asheville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) included the following tables using State population projections through 2020 and linear trend analysis to project to 2025. This information shows the City of Asheville population reaching just over 90,000 persons in 2025. If this growth was due to forces other than annexation of existing developed properties, given our current average household size of 2.14 persons per household, the City would need 9,917 additional housing units. If we assume

Population sources: Surveyed population for 1980, 1990, and 2000 is from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, Washington, D.C. Population projection to 2010 for Buncombe County is from the Office of State Planning, Raleigh, NC. Population for 2025 for Buncombe County is based on a 2020 projection from the Office of State Planning. Some local officials were contacted for input.

AAMPO and Buncombe County Population Projections

Place	Surveyed Population			Projected		Annual Percent	
	1980	1990	2000	2010	2025	1990-2000	2000-2025
Buncombe County	160,934	174,821	206,330	236,461	281,778	1.67%	1.26%
Asheville	59,985	61,885	68,889	76,701	90,112	1.08%	1.08%
Biltmore Forest	1,499	1,327	1,440	1,550	1,800	0.82%	0.90%
Black Mountain	4,083	5,418	7,511	11,134	19,146	3.32%	3.81%
Fletcher	N/A	2,787	4,185	6,284	10,000	4.15%	3.55%
Montreat	741	692	630	697	812	-0.95%	1.02%
Weaverville	1,495	2,107	2,416	2,705	5,000	1.38%	2.95%
Woodfin	N/A	2,736	3,162	3,654	6,500	1.46%	2.92%

that annexation of occupied housing units will make up 50 percent of our total population growth, we would still need 4,959 new housing units.

Additionally, these new residents will generate traffic. Between 80,000 and 100,000 new vehicle or transit trips will be added to the new population of Asheville. For Buncombe County as a whole, between 300,000 and 350,000 new trips will be added to roadways.

While these estimates are indicative of past growth patterns, it is likely that aggressive implementation of Smart Growth policies and continued annexation by the City could result in the desirable circumstance of an even greater proportion of the overall population growth of Buncombe County occurring within the Asheville city limits.

Selected City of Asheville Population Information from the 2000 Census

Total Population	68,889 persons
Total Households	30,690
Population in Households	65,678
Total Families	16,737
Population in Families	46,960
Average Family Size	2.81 persons

They Can Push People Only So Far

By Steve Twomey, Sunday, March 3, 2002; excerpted and condensed from **the Washington Post**

Ours is a Smart Growth nation these days, rebelling against a surfeit of cars, strip malls and despoiled vistas. Wouldn't it be satisfying to live in a Smart Growth kind of place? Pine no more! Move to Loudoun County! But hurry, seating is limited.

Loudoun recently overhauled its planning bible to reshape how, and how much, it will grow, a response to a 1999 ballot-box rebellion against road congestion and the ooze of subdivisions into its lovely western reaches. Oh, there will still be big-time building in the county, which stretches northwest from Washington Dulles International Airport to the West Virginia line, but in the end (or at least by 2020), Loudoun could wind up with 15 percent fewer homes than envisioned under its old plan.

Imagine if your county went on such a diet, if somebody finally did something about the gosh darn money-grubbing developers who make it so infuriating to drive to work and so difficult to park at the mall and so hard to find unblighted nature because they keep dumping so many cars and dwellings on us. Loudoun's makeover is so bold, they talk about it in Chicago, home of the American Planning Association.

There is, alas, a problem. (Isn't there always?) Any county that puts the hurt on growth really doesn't. It merely moves it, perhaps to your county. It's like squeezing a balloon. The dwellings that Loudoun and other places press out of their futures will inevitably bulge somewhere else.

What's to be done with Loudoun's future nomads and those of any other place that squeezes out growth?

Well, they could go even farther out. They might go to more distant Virginia counties or West Virginia. Of course, that means landscapes in those places would get developed. Sprawled, in other words. And because the nomads' jobs might be back in Fairfax or Loudoun itself, they would have long commutes from these farther-out spots. That would create a paradoxical consequence: Traffic might get worse because of Loudoun's new plan. Cars would be on the road longer, because drivers would live farther away than if Loudoun hadn't reduced the number of its housing units.

None of this is meant to suggest that Loudoun's plan isn't noble. Every county, city, town, village, hamlet and outpost ought to come up with more efficient, more attractive and less costly ways to accommodate citizens.

Ultimately, though, Smart Growth must still deal with actual, say-hi-to-the-Joneses growth. We can nudge and shift and plan, but there will be no return to a less-maddening era of breezy commutes and painless development.

There are going to be more people. (Unless there's a ban on procreation, relocation and immigration. And good luck with that.) You will have more neighbors. You will encounter more cars, more malls, more roads. You will notice that more and more open space is being turned over to more and more dwellings.